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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of an instruction-simulation videotape in training counselor candidates to use counselor-tacting response leads (CTRL's). Such verbal responses are viewed as essential to behavior modification therapy since they operationally define specific behavioral events and the stimulus conditions associated with these events. Three propositions were tested and accepted: (1) that immediate learning takes place; (2) that this learning was generalized to actual counseling by the counselor candidates; and (3) that the use of CTRL's did not inhibit or hinder other counselor behaviors which were examined. (TL)

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**Abstract: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTION-SIMULATION ON THE
TRAINING FOR COUNSELOR TACTING RESPONSE LEADS**

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The effectiveness of an instruction-simulation experience on the training for counselor tacting response leads was studied. The relevance of these verbal responses to behavior modification therapy was discussed. Three propositions were tested: (1) that immediate learning takes place as a result of the auto-instruction experience; (2) that this learning was generalized to actual counseling by the counselor candidates; and (3) that the use of these verbal responses did not inhibit or hinder other counselor behaviors which were examined. The results indicated acceptance of these propositions.

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTION - SIMULATION ON THE TRAINING
FOR COUNSELOR TACTING RESPONSE LEADS

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There have been many attempts to classify and categorize counselor response leads. The purpose of this study was to train counselor candidates to use one such response lead: counselor tacting response leads. Skinner (1957) has defined a verbal tacting response as a verbal operant in which a "response in given form is evoked (or at least strengthened) by a particular object or event or property of an object or event" (pp. 81-82). A very important consequence of the tact is that it "makes contact with" the physical world--ties verbal responses to actual environmental props, thus concretizing abstractions.

Four classes of client verbal tacting responses may be identified: (1) those which offer operational definitions to previous abstract referents (e.g., "When I said I can't concentrate, I meant that when I sit down to study I think about things other than what I should be studying"); (2) those which are physiological and behavioral descriptions of emotional experiences (e.g., "When I said I felt nervous, I meant that my hands shake, I stutter, and I feel butterflies in my stomach"); (3) those which tie generalizations about events to specific stimulus events (e.g., "One time I felt especially left out was when the team leader chose someone else for the job and did not choose me"); (4) those which tie generalizations about events to a variety of other specific stimulus conditions (e.g., "I also felt left out when my brother went out to play basketball and did not ask me to come with him, and the time when my parents went out for dinner and did not invite me").

These kinds of client verbal responses are essential to behavior modification therapy since they operationally define specific behavioral events and the stimulus

conditions associated with these events. Once these events and conditions are clearly identified the counselor can work toward reducing overgeneralizations (as might be identified with client verbal tacts of the class four variety) or to establish new and more desirable responses to the stimulus events described.

A description of reciprocal inhibition therapy by Wolpe (1960) clearly indicates the importance of client-tacting responses in this technique.

(The basis of reciprocal inhibition therapy is that)...if a response incompatible with anxiety can be made to occur in the presence of anxiety-evoking stimuli, it will weaken the bond between these stimuli and the anxiety response.... The first requirement of a planned attack on neurotic anxieties on the principle of reciprocal inhibition is to determine in what circumstances (stimulus conditions) anxieties are aroused in the patient. (p. 91)

Another vital step in the desensitization technique is the construction of an "anxiety hierarchy" which is a "list of stimuli to which the patient reacts with unadaptive anxiety." (p. 94)

This would suggest that it is important for behavior therapists to acquire skill in using verbal leads which will evoke client-verbal tacts. These counselor responses may be called counselor tacting response leads (CTRLs), whose purpose is to evoke client-tacting responses of one of the four classes described above. Examples of CTRLs designed to evoke client responses of each of the four categories above would be: (1) "Tell me what you mean when you say you can't concentrate"; (2) "How do you feel inside when you say you are nervous? What happens to you?" (3) "Tell a specific time when you felt especially left out"; (4) "Tell me other times when it has seemed to you as though you were left out." The technique of audio-video simulation was employed to train counselor candidates in the use of this verbal response category.

Simulated training techniques have frequently been found useful as effective teaching media. Simulation, by definition, means assuming the appearance of without

really being. Thus a video tape containing a series of clients describing their problems would simulate a series of actual counseling interviews.

Using such simulated experiences as training techniques appears to overcome several difficulties. First, such a tape offers an opportunity for exposure to a wide variety of clients--a much greater variety than could possibly be met first hand. Second, video tapes of clients to whom the counselor can respond offer an excellent means of reducing the gap between classroom and field. By using such tapes for training, the prospective counselor can learn his mistakes and correct them without fear of seriously damaging his relationship with actual clients. Thus, through this method of simulation, prospective counselors should feel more confident in actual counseling situations. A third advantage is that the use of such instructional techniques allows the practicum supervisory personnel more time to do things the tapes cannot do or do as well, such as devoting more effort and attention to individual supervision. The advantage to the prospective counselor is that he has a greater opportunity for individual contact with his supervisor. Thus video tapes would appear to have advantages to both professional counselor educators and counselors-in-training. These tapes expedite goal-attainment and the overall improvement of the training program.

The use of simulation techniques in training both teachers and counselors has been proposed in the literature. The problems described above in training counselors also apply to training future teachers. In attempting to deal with these difficulties Kersh (1961) has developed an audio-visual training technique which simulates an actual classroom. A series of 16mm films are projected onto a rear projection screen. The films simulate actual classroom situations, to which the future teacher must respond as if he were a teacher in an actual teaching

situation. Depending upon his response his supervisor can manipulate the simulated situation much like a branching programmed instruction.

Beaird and Standish (1964) used an audio-simulation technique to train counselors to discriminate between cognitive and affective client responses and then to use certain response leads so as to generate more client affect responses. The training program consisted of student counselors listening and responding to a preconstructed audio tape of a client presenting and discussing her problems. As the counselor responded the practicum supervisor commented on the counselors responses so that he soon learned to make affect-evoking response leads. Both experimental and control counselors participated in pre- and post-treatment interviews with actual clients. Data were based on tape analyses of the pre- and post-treatment interviews. The tapes were scored for affect evoking counselor leads. The data indicated that the performance of the experimental group (those who received audio-simulation experience) improved over time and at a significantly greater rate than the control group (those not receiving audio-simulation training), indicating that this simulation procedure was effective in training a particular class of counselor-response leads.

Delaney (1967) has proposed and described a package of audio-visual auto-instructional counselor training programs. The package would consist of a series of video tapes, each designed to train a specific counselor-response lead. The program would be designed so that prospective counselors would respond to the clients on tape. Thus in many ways the program would simulate actual counseling situations.

The purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to study the effectiveness of an audio-visual, auto-instructional counselor training program designed to teach

the use of CTRLs; (2) to study the transfer of this acquired skill from the simulation environment to an actual counseling session; and (3) to study the effect of the use of CTRL on accepted counselor behavior dimensions.

Method

Subjects

The subjects used in this study were four post-master's degree students enrolled in a practicum in counseling in the Division of Counselor Education at the University of Illinois . There were two males and two females. The subjects were uninformed with respect to the experimental propositions and unaware that their behavior in the therapy sessions was to be analyzed for the present study.

Apparatus

A video tape consisting of 40 isolated client responses was developed. Ten different clients (five boys and five girls) appeared in random order in the 40 segments of the tape, each making a rehearsed response from a given script. Each client responded for approximately 15 seconds, then remained on the screen for 15 additional seconds, during which time the subject was instructed to respond to the client. All responses made to the video tape by the subject were audio-recorded for later scoring. The first 20 client response tape cuts served as a premeasure, the last 20 client response cuts served as a post-measure. Between the pre- and post-measures, a ten-minute instructional treatment was presented to Ss. This was designed to describe the meaning and purpose of CTRLs, the four categories of such responses, and when the use of such response leads is appropriate. Incorporated into this instructional sequence were demonstrations of the use of CTRLs.

Instruments

Using the criteria offered by Skinner which were described earlier, counselor responses to the 40 frames of the video tape were scored as to whether or not they

were of the CTRL category. This procedure allowed the researchers to study learning in the instructional situation. Actual counseling sessions of the candidates were taped and similarly scored to study the generalization of this learning.

In addition, the candidates' tapes were rated on the Counselor Rating Scale for the following dimensions: Lack of awareness--Intellectual insight; Bland-Personal impact; Timidity--Courage to explore; Defensiveness and rigidity--Openness of self; Resistant--Understanding; Coldness--Warmth; Disorganized--Logically organized; Dependence--Independence; and, Overall ineffectiveness--Overall effectiveness. Each dimension was rated on a six-point scale, e.g., from Lack of awareness (1) to Intellectual insight (6). This was performed in order to study what effect CTRLs had on other counselor behaviors.

Procedure

In order to use the Ss as their own control, both pre- and post-treatment, three three-week time periods were used. One tape of each counselor candidate in a live initial counseling session was randomly selected from the first and third weeks of the first time period. This period preceded the treatment experience. During the second week of the next three-week time period, the Ss were presented with the audio-video auto-instructional tape. This tape consisted of 20 isolated client responses, the ten-minute instructional sequence followed by another 20 isolated client responses. One tape of each counselor candidate in a live initial counseling session was randomly selected from the first and third weeks of the last, and final, time period. This period followed the treatment experience.

Results and Discussion

1. Learning in the instructional-simulation experience

In support of the first proposition immediate learning did take place as a result of the instructional-simulation experience. The comparison of the frequency of CTRLs from pre - to post - measure of the instructional tape was a 100% increase, or a frequency score of 34 to 65, representing the mean scores of three independent judges. Pearson Product Moment correlated between pairs of the three judges yielded an average interjudge reliability of .84. The decrease in the use of other than CTRLs was from a 46 on the pre-measure to a 15 on the post-measure. There were 80 responses on both the pre and post measures.

2. Generalization of Learning

In order to study the effectiveness of the instructional-simulation experience in actual counseling, one-tailed t-tests for correlated means were performed on the scores of tapes made by the candidates in initial counseling sessions. These tapes, all 50 minutes or more in length, were analyzed by prepracticum graduate students. The entire tape was independently scored by at least two of these prepracticum students.

Using the experimental group as their own control, an analysis of the tapes of the counselor candidates in counseling in an initial session between the first and third weeks of the first three-week period was performed. Table 3 represents the results of these findings. Here it can be seen there was a mean decrease in the frequency of use of CTRL responses; however, this decrease was not significant.

TABLE 1

An analysis of the results of the tape scores between the last taped session before the instructional-simulation treatment and the first taped session after the treatment demonstrates the impact the treatment had on the subjects. There was a significant increase. The first post-treatment taped session was made one week after the treatment. An examination of the results of the analysis made on the two taped sessions following the treatment demonstrates a significant mean decrease, however, there is still a much larger mean score on the use of CTRL between taped sessions one and four. In Table 3 is also presented the significant results of combining both pre- and post-measures to demonstrate the effectiveness of the generalization of learning from the instructional treatment.

3. Counselor Rating Scale

As each tape was scored by the judges they were instructed to rate the counselor on the Counselor Rating Scale. The results of these ratings are presented in Table 4, using the combined scores on two tapes for pre- and post-taped counseling

TABLE 2

sessions. There appears to be a general trend toward a positive increase over time on these scales. The increase on Personal Impact and Overall Effectiveness was significant at $p < .10$, while the increase on the measure of Warmth was significant at $p < .05$. Thus it appears that with the increase in CTRLs there is at least no reduction in other ratings of counselor effectiveness. On the contrary there are some data in support of the proposition that counselors are perceived as being more effective.

Conclusions

This study was designed to investigate the effectiveness of an instruction-simulation video tape in training counselor candidates to use counselor-tacting

response leads. It has been described that these verbal responses are essential to behavior modification therapy since they operationally define specific behavioral events and the stimulus conditions in which they occur. The data support the proposition that exposure to the video tape had a significant effect on the counselor's tendency to use CTRLs. With respect to the counselors' responses to the actual video tape, there were significantly more CTRLs during the post-instruction simulated situations than during the preinstruction simulated situations. Further the data suggest that these learning effects generalize to actual counseling situations. More CTRLs occurred in post-instruction counseling situations than in preinstruction counseling situations. Finally, the use of these responses does not appear to hinder the development of other important counselor behaviors, and may actually facilitate their development.

TABLE 1--Means, Paired Standard Error and t-values for frequency of Counselor Tacting Response Leads between Test Occasion One and Two, Two and Three, Three and Four and between Test Occasion Pre-(A) and Post-(B) Treatment

Variable	Mean 1	Mean 2	Paired Standard Error	t
CTRL Test 1 to Test 2	15.16	12.08	1.89	-1.63
CTRL Test 2 to Test 3	12.08	46.58	9.23	3.73*
CTRL Test 3 to Test 4	46.58	32.66	5.68	-2.44*
CTRL Test A to Test B	27.25	79.25	14.86	3.49*

*p < .05 or greater

TABLE 2.--Means Paired Standard Error and t-values for
Variables on Counselor Rating Scale between Test Occasions Pre- and Post-Treatment

Variable	Mean 1	Mean 2	Paired Standard Error	t
Intellectual insight	5.33	6.17	.739	1.13
Personal impact	4.83	6.16	.653	2.04*
Courage to explore	5.08	5.91	.799	1.04
Openness of self	5.00	5.83	.947	n.s
Understanding	4.75	6.08	.849	1.57
Warmth	5.08	6.08	.272	3.67**
Logical organization	5.25	5.83	.369	1.57
Independence	5.08	5.17	.643	n.s
Overall effectiveness	4.83	5.75	.478	1.91*

* $p < .10$

** $p < .05$ or greater

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